

What's In a Name?

By Virgil C. Funk

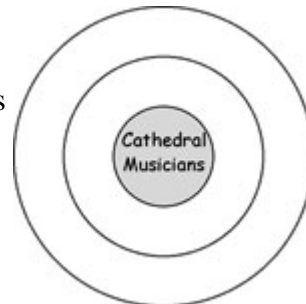
Rev. Virgil C. Funk, a presbyter of the Diocese of Richmond, VA, is the founder and first president/CEO of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians.

Names make a difference. Certainly, being a "Virgil" has affected my personality. What we call things even seems to affect their behavior. T. S. Eliot observed that "the Naming of Cats is a difficult matter,/It isn't just one of your holiday games . . ." The ancient story of the first parents naming the animals, the stories of God changing Abram's name and Jesus changing Simon's (or, at least, adding the nickname Peter)-all are vivid testimony to the significance of a name. As the Jewish community continually reminds us, "Words make a difference." What we are willing to call another person-and what we are not-determines how we order our reality.

At a recent meeting of the Board of Directors for the Director of Music Ministries Division (DMMD), I was asked to explain my reason for creating the names "director of music ministries" (DMM) and "responsible for music ministries" (RMM) to describe certain functions that pastoral musicians perform. In my explanation to the board, something clicked for me and for them that helped to clarify the meaning and relationship of these names. So they have requested that I make that same explanation to the membership. I'll try to create what happened-but the explanation emerged very spontaneously on that day.

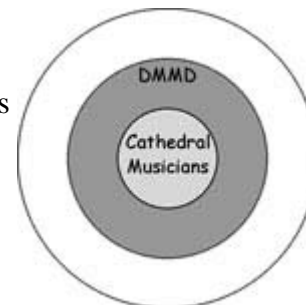
First, we were discussing the various forms of leadership exercised by musicians in the Catholic Church. I drew three circles to clarify my own thinking and the unfolding discussion.

Cathedral Musicians



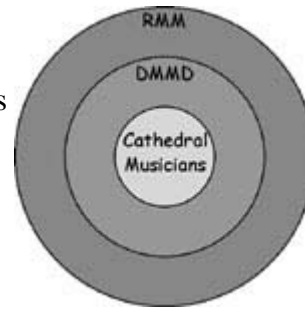
Among the body of church musicians, those serving the bishop at the cathedral have traditionally held a primacy in our church. They should continue to do so in our language.

Director of Music Ministries



Directors of music ministries are the persons who have a full-time professional responsibility for music ministry in the parish. They are paid staff of the parish and make their living from this service.

Responsible for Music Ministries



Among those responsible for music ministries in the parish, some are full-time volunteers, some are part-time volunteers, and some are part-time salaried staff. Some are responsible for all the pastoral music in the parish; some are responsible for only one Eucharist on a Sunday.

The point is that cathedral musicians and directors of music ministries are among those who are "responsible for music ministries," but they hold this responsibility in a special way, either because they are assigned to a cathedral or because they are full-time salaried staff members. The "Aha!" experience for the DMMD Board was the recognition that cathedral musicians and the directors of music ministries are nested within the wider category of those responsible for music ministries. Or, to say it another way, RMM and DMM are not in competition with one another for organizational identification: They are part of the same whole, but they simply have different ways of holding that position.

In NPM's history, we created the Division for Directors of Music Ministries first. Then came the Section for Those Responsible for Music Ministries-the RMMs. The cathedral musicians formed their own organization, the Conference of Roman Catholic Cathedral Musicians (CRCCM). So all those involved in these groups did not learn about RMM and DMM and CRCCM in exactly the same way, and few understood that each was nested inside the other. Organizationally they are not, but theoretically they should be!

And that was the "Aha!" that broke out during the DMMD Board meeting. It led to this question: How can we help all these people-cathedral musicians and directors of music ministry and part-time salaried and volunteer music directors-develop an understanding that the overarching term is that we are *all* responsible for music ministries-music ministries that include organists, choir directors, singers, instrumentalists, clergy, and the rest of the assembly?

The first step is to present this "chart" and explanation by the person who named the different groups in our Association, with the hope and expectation that this explanation will help people understand why a director of music ministries and a cathedral musician and a part-time volunteer who leads one liturgy on Sunday are all responsible for music ministries-but each in a different way.

So how shall we name you? Are you a cathedral musician responsible for music ministries or a director of music ministries responsible for music ministries? Having a special term like "director" for those who are full-time and salaried certainly begins to establish the importance of the person in our field who does this work as primary employment. But the most important insight to be shared is that everyone involved with musical leadership has the most privileged name-responsible for music ministries!